"road is such that the Division Officer has to be specially addressed every time a large "motor goes over it. As regards the road extension, it is all but at a stand-still. A "few miles are opened every year; that is all. The road system of the country is, to "all intents and purposes, practically what it was when Mr. A. H. Jacob left, although "in the meantime the population has increased by thirty per cent and the revenue by "more, and land values have increased fourfold. As regards the canal system, its "condition is a reproach to the State. The *vallam* traffic is enormous and steamer "traffic is developing fast. But the boats are continually in difficulties. There should "be a channel four feet deep from Trivandrum to Cochin; the cost of dredging should "be met by tolls, which, falling as they ultimately would on the "merchandise, would be nothing in comparison to the benefit given. "It seems to me that expenditure on these lines would tend more to the "development and benefit of the State than money expended on buildings." The Government note that, at successive Sessions of the Assembly, the majority of the representations made, relate to the need for new roads or to the improvements necessary in the existing ones. There can be no doubt that a great deal has to be done in this direction, and the Members may rest assured that, if it is not possible to give effect to their wishes as rapidly as they probably desire, it is not on account of any want of appreciation by the Government of the needs of the country in the matter of communications, but it is because of the circumstance that, with the limited volume of spare money at our disposal and the limited staff whose services we can command, progress has necessarily to be somewhat slow.

13. **The State Railway.**—The amount paid by the Government to make up the guaranteed interest on the State Railway was Bh. Rs. 1,66,000, against Bh. Rs. 1,71,000 in the previous year. There can be no doubt that the traffic of the Railway is developing, though slowly, as will be evident from the fact that the guaranteed interest paid by the Government has been going down for a series of years :—

1080	Bh. Rs. 2,78,000.
1081	„ 2,19,000.
1082	„ 2,38,000.
1083	„ 1,78,000.
1084	„ 1,88,000.
1085	„ 1,71,000.
1086	„ 1,66,000.

It is anticipated that the cancellation of the export duty on timber, referred to by me *supra*, will give a stimulus to the traffic of that commodity going over the Railway.

His Highness' Government have not yet received the plans and estimates for the extension of the State Railway from Quilon to Trivandrum. The authorities concerned have been asked to expedite the same.

14. **Vaccination.**—There was a substantial increase in the volume of vaccination work, the total number of vaccinations performed rising from 1,58,834 to 1,74,631. By an amendment to the Town Improvement Committee Regulation, passed during the latter part of 1085, the Government took power to make vaccination compulsory in the towns governed by that Regulation. In exercise of that power,

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vaccination was made compulsory in Nagercoil from the 1st Chingam 1086. The question of extending compulsory vaccination to a few other towns is now under the consideration of the Government.

15. **Town Improvement Committees.**—Three new towns were brought under the Town Improvement Committee Regulation during the year, so that, on the last day of the year, the number of towns governed by the Regulation was eight in all. The Committees on the whole did good work, and the way in which they have been developing local taxation is, in the opinion of the Government, a particularly healthy sign. The amount realised by local taxation during the year was Rs. 34,372, against Rs. 18,137, which was the amount so raised in the previous year. The Government grant to the Committees fell from Rs. 46,644 to Rs. 38,157. The aggregate expenditure incurred by the Committees rose from Rs. 55,842 to Rs. 62,261, and their aggregate closing balance also rose, from Rs. 11,361 to Rs. 21,629. The policy of the Government in regard to the Committees is to leave them a considerable latitude of action in the management of their affairs. The grants given to them from the General Revenues are now fixed amounts, which it is not likely that the Government would hereafter increase. On the other hand, as the Town Funds are quite apart from the State Balance, and as the Committees have been given the fullest possible assurance that the monies raised by them and their balances are wholly at their disposal, the way is now open to the people in each town to improve their condition. In deference to the wish expressed by more than one Member at the last Session of the Assembly, the Government have recently passed rules granting to the ratepayers in the older towns of Trivandrum, Nagercoil, Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam, the privilege of electing almost all their non-official members.

16. **Medical Relief.**—The number of Sirkar hospitals remained the same as in the previous year, namely 21, but that of the dispensaries rose from 23 to 28, the five new dispensaries being Kothamangalam, Ettumanur, Chengannur, Adur and Kayankulam. Every taluk in the State has now a hospital or a dispensary, and several have more than one. The expenditure on the Medical Department rose from Rs. 3,59,000 to Rs. 3,78,000.

17. **Education.**—The information regarding Education given in Chapter VII of the report is, I believe, pretty full. I do not propose to say much on that subject here. Education was one of the subjects discussed at considerable length at the last Session of the Assembly. The representations made by the Members then have been considered and dealt with by the Government in an order issued last November. I would content myself with saying that, whatever the hardships caused in individual cases, the result of the changes made during the last two or three years has been not only to increase the control of the department over education, but also to increase the *efficiency* of the instruction imparted in the schools generally. The unrecognised schools in the State are an undoubted source of weakness, and the Government consider the substantial reduction in the strength of these schools, referred to in para 198 of the report, as one of the most healthy signs in regard to education. The policy of simultaneously improving the quality of education and of increasing its volume is of course involving the Government in heavier expenditure year after year. The net expenditure rose from Rs. 5,89,000 in 1085 to Rs. 6,23,000 in 1086, and a great deal more of increase is anticipated in the near future.

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